



More Money to Tackle Poverty at the Grassroots

US \$1.9 million has been contributed by the Swedish government for Mongolia's poverty alleviation efforts. UNDP is distributing the new funds to the Poverty Alleviation Programme Office's Local Development Fund and Women's Development Fund. The grant will support the hiring of 30 more community activists for poverty alleviation, in addition to the present 25.

The poverty fund aims to increase income generation via small credits and targeted assistance to the poor. The Swedish contribution increases the number of beneficiaries and also the quality, fruitfulness and impact of the programme.

In poverty alleviation the role of community activists is great. Experience has shown projects facilitated by community activists are more successful. Community activists acting as facilitators, help at the grassroots in formulating projects, providing training, directing recipients in the market, providing them with information, communication and coordinating their activities.

The fund is slated for 1998 and successful utilization might receive more funds from the Swedish government.

UNDP is topping up funds for the Poverty Alleviation Project by US\$20,500 to ensure effective use of the Swedish grant. This big addition to the project was signed by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, UNDP and the Swedish ambassador.



A UNDP-funded microcredit loan helped Mr. Dondog of Ulaanbaatar plant a small fruit and vegetable garden.

1997 MHDR Gets the Once-over in Survey

K. D. Mekuria, UNV; Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation Project, UNDP.

Into its second printing, the supply of 10,000 copies of the 1997 Mongolian Human Development Report (MHDR) are almost exhausted. Already preparations under way for the 1999 Mongolian Human Development Report and the post-mortems are coming in on the first report. Earlier this year an opinion survey was conducted of readers by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and UNDP's Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation Project - and the results of the survey are being used in preparations for the upcoming MHDR.

Survey Says:

◆ A common complaint was the 1997 MHDR was short of rigorous analysis and in aimag coverage. This was due to the lack of statistical data, both at the national and regional level. To remedy the problem, it would be appropriate to back up future work on MHDR with national "Integrated Household

Surveys".



The future MHDR has to be produced by Mongolian writers. Nevertheless, as the concept of "human poverty" is a relatively new phenomenon in Mongolia, there isn't much research and/or experience by the nationals. Much of the reference materials are available in English only, for which only few have access. In this respect, for some time to come, the continued technical support of UNDP and other International Organisations will be necessary for producing the MHDR to a

high standard.

◆ On presentation, it was recommended that the report be accessible to a general reader. One possible way of implementing this is to have a supplementary report by re-

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT MONGOLIA 1997



Quicker telephone access to UNDP

UNDP's Ulaanbaatar office has replaced six telephone numbers with one. The change frees up five lines and eliminates long queues when calling the office. Now you will be able to reach the office at:

(976-1) 327585.

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News in a flash

The present wheat seed pool in Mongolia is at six to seven generations, consequently, the productive quality is not that high. For the purpose of rejuvenating the seed pool, about 200 tonnes of high quality wheat seed is being imported from Kazakhstan before the planting season. UNDP's Emergency Production of High Quality Wheat Seed and New Variety Testing Project has allocated US\$ 100,000 for the purchase of the seed. The seed is to be distributed to eight to 10 cereal farms for multiplication purposes under the supervision of Agroprom company.

1 0,000 households in Ulaanbaatar city will be provided with vegetable seed and instructions on how to grow vegetables. In connection with the national Green Revolution programme of the Mongolian Government, UNDP is spending US \$20,000 from its seed project to help purchase seeds and instruction booklets. In order to ensure the successful delivery of the support, the Poverty Alleviation Study Centre, an NGO, has been contracted.

Having a homepage on the Internet has become a useful way to introduce and publicize any organization. In fact more and more organizations in Mongolia are being drawn towards the Internet, with over 70 Mongolian homepages currently in operation.

Representatives of more than 150 organizations gathered together for a homepage design workshop. The workshop organized by UNDP's Information, Communication and Technology Project took place in March. Stressing the importance of the workshop for the development of information and technology in Mongolia, Mr. Lhagva, Chief of the Cabinet Secretariat, noted "the training will enable the organizations to design their homepages and make them known to the public and private sectors hooked to the network."

UNDP's Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme (APDIP) held its first Information and Technology (IT) Seminar on the Internet in March. This first seminar, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was tailored to the needs of the Mongolian Government's delegation. The delegates, seven ministerial and one private sector representatives, are part of a working group charged with the task to advise the Government on assessment, policies and implementation of IT strategy. The head of the delegation Mr. Badral, Foreign Policy advisor to the Prime Minister, declared: "We have accomplished in three days here what would have taken three months."

The attendance by the Mongolian Government at the seminar was part of the preparation activities to the National IT summit that will take place this summer.

The APDIP contributed US \$12,000 to Mongolia country office of UNDP to be spent on establishing the Citizen's Information Service Centre in Dundgovi aimag and to support the UN Information Shop's Internet connection for the public.

Rural Journalists Learn to Get the Facts

Rural newspaper journalists have a very busy life. They work as the newspaper reporter, editor and deal with administrative stuff, all at the same

February of this year, 126 people were trained in 21 aimags. The method being used widely was debate. One of the trainings was visited by UNDP

From the interview with the training centre coordinators

- Are there any changes you can feel with the training centres?
Mr. Munkhdalai, coordinator of the central region centre:

- Journalists are trying to work now from the to-serve-the-public-needs perspective, whereas before they used to incorporate their own views and thoughts on stories. Now they also reach the source of the event.

Ms. Byambasuren, coordinator of the western centre:

- Journalists now started writing editorials. Writing editorials requires always looking for fresh information.

~ How do you assess the results of the trainings?

- After the training sessions, questionnaires are conducted to evaluate the training. The result is also seen from the journalists' programmes, if it is TV and radio, and the articles they write. On a certain topic, usually the journalists bring their products for discussion and after being discussed, they finalize the product.

Ms. Niniin, Project Administration Assistant, Press Institute of Mongolia:

- We are going to make a collection of articles, written by the trainees at the Press Institute so that we could see the difference before and after the training. This could also be used as the training material.

At the informal meeting of the regional centre coordinators at the PIM, coordinators expressed their wish as well. Mr. Munkhdalai: "For our daily activities and for the journalists use, the training centres need English language dictionaries and photo cameras. If the centres are provided with photo cameras, they could be of use for different purposes: training, documenting the visuals and reporting."

The rural journalists like Mr. Togoodorj continue getting professional support from regional training centres. The regional training centres covering six regions (central, north, east, south, north-west, west) have been running since late 1997. This year the centres plan to conduct training on five topics. The centres, managed by the Press Institute of Mongolia (PIM) and funded under UNDP's Consolidation of Democracy through Strengthening of Journalism Project, focus on research, identifying the needs of local journalists, holding press conferences and establishing information centres.

In the training conducted in January to

Clean Water - the Key to Rapid Development

by WASH-21 Project Team

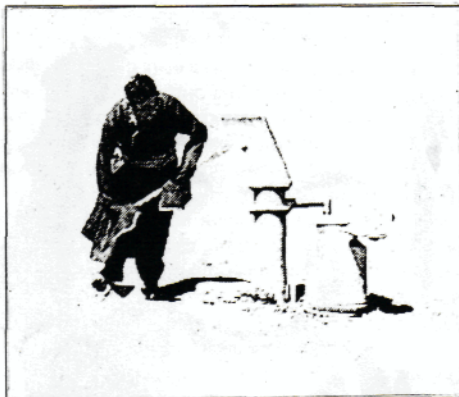
In Mongolia underground water is the main source of protected water supply for most towns and rural settlements such as soum and bag centers. Furthermore, many wells have been drilled to provide water for herdsman and their livestock. Some wells also provide irrigation water for animal fodder as well as for vegetables, wheat, etc.

Mongolia's water resources consist of rivers and lakes (these are most extensive in the north and north-west parts of the country) and widely distributed underground water. These water resources are replenished by rain and snow and this occurs more in the north, with up to 500 mm. of annual precipitation; whereas in the southern Gobi the precipitation is often only 50 to 100 mm. per year.

Underground water is attractive because it can often be found within 50 meters below the ground surface. Nevertheless, there are sometimes problems in that underground geologic formations may not have enough cracks or open passages to allow water to flow to the wells. In cold and mountainous areas, much of the fresh water near the surface may be frozen in the form of permafrost. In the Gobi and some other areas the underground water may have high concentrations of minerals such as calcium, fluoride, iron,

of media organizations. About the usefulness of the training, Mr. L. Togoodorj, reporter of "Ardyn Elch" local newspaper, says: "If you attend these trainings continuously, you will gain some understanding of journalism. Interrelationship between the sessions are good. The training not only provides with new ideas and directions of journalism, but refreshing as well. For instance, I worked in media since 1972. If before the journalism served as the propaganda of communist ideology - now we put first the real fact." According to Mr. Togoodorj, the regional training centres are serving their purpose, but "still close cooperation between the regional journalists should be ensured."

magnesium, manganese, nitrates, salt and sulfides. Such water is said to be "hard" or "brackish". Careful investigation and exploration is needed to find water fresh enough to be good tasting and healthy.



Fortunately, a lot of exploration and development work has been done in Mongolia in order to define the underground water resources and to put them to good use for human and economic benefit. The Government of Mongolia has carried out various development programmes and has received support from several sources. For example, Australia and the World Bank are assisting and urban serv-

ices rehabilitation project to improve water supply and other services in about 12 ger areas of Ulaanbaatar. Japan is also assisting the improvement of water treatment in Ulaanbaatar and with a better water supply for Altai city. The Asian Development Bank is also involved in a project to improve water supply and other urban services in western aimags. UNDP, Australia, Netherlands and Sweden are providing funds for the WASH -21 Project (Development of a National Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Education Programme for the 21st Century which will provide potable water in six aimags and their soum

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Clean water

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centers). France is also assisting in the area of water and waste water treatment.

In collaboration with the World Health Organization and the WASH-21 Project, the national water quality standards for both rural and urban water supply are being reviewed and some additional equipment and training for water quality testing are being arranged. The government is currently reviewing the policies and programmes in the water sector with a view to:

- provide a legal framework to enable the development of water supply in an efficient and sustainable manner;
- implement a national program to ensure that water is equitably distributed and reasonably priced;

• protect water quality by treating waste water and making polluters pay for the cost of cleaning up their waste water; and

- manage water exploitation in an integrated manner with adequate guidelines and regulations to achieve the maximum beneficial use.

These plans, strategies and policies will be developed in consultation with the public and with water sector workers, professional centers of technical expertise and other development partners willing and able to provide substantial support for water resource development, protection and management.

The sixth annual World Water Day was celebrated in various countries around the world on March 22 of this year. The theme selected for 1998 was Underground Water - the Invisible Resource. This theme was selected because the United Nations system has expressed its concern about the following three problems in underground water management:

- in many countries underground water is being polluted by chemicals from agriculture, industry, mining and untreated urban waste water;
- in many countries there is a lack of public and even professional awareness about the need to protect and manage underground water properly; and
- many people do not seem to know how valuable and important underground water is; therefore, they do not realize the negative economic implications of mismanaging underground water by allowing over-pumping and pollution.

Up Close and Personal

Interview with Ms. Davaasuren, UNDP's Environmental Public Awareness Programme

What did you do before the project?

I worked for the Ministry of Nature and the Environment, being responsible for information.

Why did you choose to work in the project?

There are several reasons. First, it allows you to deal and work with more people. You have the opportunities to be creative and independent, whereas in the ministry you are only given the task and you have to do it whether you like it or not. Seeing the fruits of your own initiative and work, identifying your further goals, you learn from your mistakes. It allows you to develop yourself. On the other side, working for the international organization, you also learn a lot. Specifically, working for the project gives you opportunities to gain other skills like managerial, coordinating and other skills.

What do you specifically like about your job?

We are working for people. I'm very interested in my job. The only difficulty is that I'm so busy that often I can not be close to my family and self-development is left behind.

Your project is finishing pretty soon. Any plans after the project? What is your future perspective?

Probably, I will continue working with the community. I gained some skills on working in the project. I will work in a project and would like to contribute my knowledge and deliver it to others.

I think I can cope with any kind of job given.

Tell us about your family.

I live with my husband and two sons.

Could you give an example of the best small project?

Here we should talk about the results. Small projects are very fruitful, because they address a particular issue. The results of small projects are visible already in three to four months.

What is your favourite movie?

"Gone with the Wind". I love the main character. She's a very strong, tough and brave woman, who would never give up something despite the difficulties. In fact, deep in her heart she is quite the opposite character: simple, feminine. These two opposite characters are contradicting with each other. It is interesting.

Could you please share with our readers a funny story from your life or an anecdote?

Funny things happen everyday. I like listening to them, unfortunately, myself I'm very bad at telling and remembering. At the moment, nothing comes to my mind.

Innovative Use of Women Scientists to Reduce Poverty

Progress in the reduction of poverty and the development of science and technology has contributed to the advancement of women in Mongolia, China and the Republic of Mongolia. The three countries recognized the important role that women scientists in the sub-region play in the development of information and communication technology, renewable energy technology and bio-chemical technology. It was also recognized that the benefits of science and technology can have a significant impact on women living in poverty, to improve their living and working conditions.

Under the project, Mongolian women scientists will contribute to the development of biochemical technology and its application in income generation and improving living conditions of poor women in the sub-region.

In the first UNDP sub-regional project for North East Asia on gender in development, women scientists not only will gain, but will contribute to the development of women in their respective countries. With UNDP funding of US \$500,000 for two years, Mongolia, China and the Republic of Korea will conduct joint needs assessments in the region and adapt the project to the area's needs. China will contribute by applying renewable energy technology for improving the living conditions of poor women and Korea will do the same with food processing.

The project will also develop a training manual in the application of science and technology in improving the lives of poor women.

News in a flash

The National Information, Education and Communication strategy for HIV/AIDS/STD for the coming two years is going to be submitted to the UN theme group on HIV/AIDS/STD. UNDP's HIV/AIDS team, UN agencies and some women's NGOs are working on drafting the Terms of Reference.

The Poverty Alleviation Programme Office has conducted training for soum and khoroo officials on social development, business concepts, poverty funds and NGO components of the programme. The training will help to accelerate the Poverty Alleviation Programme implementation. At the present time a total of 90 soums and khoros were covered in the training. "The training provides good understanding of the programme to the soum level officials. It is especially important at the time when the decision-making is being decentralized to soum levels", noted Ms. Christine Musisi. Poverty Alleviation Programme Office gender specialist and United Nations Volunteer.

UNDP-funded Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation Project with the involvement of the Government, ministries, Poverty Alleviation Programme Office, State Statistical Office and the representatives of the media took the first tour to country to see the implementation of poverty projects, and explore gender issues at the local level and the outreach of information to localities. This measure is preceding the think tank workshop on Poverty programme implementation tentatively scheduled for July. The workshop will also identify further objectives and directions of implementation plans of poverty projects.

The UNDP Reference Unit has moved to the former Polish Embassy building and taken on a new name: the United Nations Information Shop. Its doors opened to the public at the beginning of April, but much work still needs to be done. The Shop will house a Development Resource Centre and an Internet cafe. So far the funds to complete the establishment of the Shop have not arrived from UN headquarters in New York. It is hoped the Shop will have its official inauguration in early summer. The development collection will be expanded and the Shop will offer more magazines for readers. It will also distribute to users all UN publications produced for Mongolia.



Where the Steppe Meets
the Internet
Sustainable Development in Mongolia



United Nations Homepage: www.un-mongolia.mn
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1997 MHDR Survey

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producing the analysis in an easy-to-read and illustrative fashion.

♦ Increase the coverage to mirror the day-to-day experiences and feelings of common people at the aimag level and to draw concrete and feasible policy suggestions.

♦ The shortcomings in the 1997 MHDR distribution and/or dissemination was a point repeatedly mentioned by users. It was astonishing to hear (even) from a senior official (e.g. the department head at the Ministry of X) that he can only hear about the goodness of the report, but not lucky enough to get a copy. Among others, it is recommended that the future report's distribution be improved, targeting grass roots readers, such as elementary and community school teachers.

Otherwise, the 1997 MHDR was a success and was considered by many as an intellectual leader, and we hope that the 1999 MHDR will be even more useful by capitalising on the experience and the good lessons learned from producing the 1997 MHDR.



In Darkhan 40 different varieties of seed were tested. The seeds came from Canada, Mexico and Kazakhstan. The first year trial showed that the seeds were of good quality for the Mongolian condition. This year the seed is going to be tried in 3 different places.

Arrivals/Departures

Mr. Paul Groenewegen, Dutch JPO took up his responsibilities in the environment team, UNDP; **Ms. Christine Musisi**, Ugandan gender specialist and UNV at PAPO has finished her contract; **Ms. Ariuntuul** is sitting at the reception desk temporarily until mid-May; **Mr. Kalaba, Eliko**, Zambian UNV, rural business promotion specialist in Arkhangai will be leaving the country soon upon completion of his assignment; **Mr. Tsvetan Bojadjev**, Bulgarian UNV working on the decentralization project in Khovd is also due to leave soon; **Ms. Sanna Juvonen**, Finnish UNV working on biodiversity project is moving to Dornod with the project; **Mr. G. Munkhzaya**, previously the driver for MAP-21 project, has started his work as the driver in UNDP office.



It's Blue and for You!

A new information folder is helping to better explain the work of the UNDP in Mongolia. The information folder offers a general introduction to UNDP and its three programme areas in both English and Mongolian. Copies can be obtained from the Communications Office at UNDP and are currently being distributed to all projects. The publication is also available at the UN Homepage: <http://www.un-mongolia.mn>.

Mongolia's Youth: Empowered Citizens for the New Millennium

Seeking comments on MOU ...

by David Sadoway, OIKOS Consultant

The second draft of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreement between the Government of Mongolia and UN agencies is now complete. The draft now being circulated amongst government and the UN is a three-year agreement including five strategic thrusts, 20 goals and 76 supported and proposed activities. The innovative process of developing a UN-Mongolia agreement will hopefully result in positive, measurable benefits for the nation's youth well into the next millennium.

The 25-page document entitled: "Mongolia's Youth: Empowered Citizens for the New Millennium" points out the serious employment and social problems that youth are faced with in Mongolia. It also indicates that Mongolia is one of the youngest nations, demographically-speaking, on the planet and as such needs to consider this in its delivery of services and programmes.

The five key thrusts touch on:

- * Coordinating Mongolian-UN Activities
- * Unemployment and Poverty
- * Education
- * Health
- * Sustainable Development.

A wide range of existing activities are presently delivered by the UN System to support youth - the document identifies up to 21 "supported activities". New ideas are also presented for joint exploration by Government, the UN System and the growing youth NGO community.

The agreement states that "As a partner to the Government, the UN will strive to assist Mongolia in seeing that its youth are empowered citizens for the new millennium."

UN Agencies, projects and civil service organizations can do their part in assisting the UN Theme Group on Youth by providing their feedback on Draft 2 of the MOU. English and Mongolian copies of the document will be available by April 15th. Please contact Mr. Tuvshin at UNDP to obtain a copy. Your comments on the Draft may be forwarded to Theme Group Members:

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We accept letters! All letters should be no more than 200 words in length. News briefs should be a maximum of 100 words each. Field reports should not exceed 350 words. The Blue Sky Bulletin is a publication of the United Nations Development Programme in Mongolia. The newsletter is published every month. The next deadline for submissions is the 18th of every month. All submissions must be sent to B. Zoltuya, Information assistant, c/o Elbegzaya, UNDP,

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